

AN African-American Perspective

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Haiti: Still Paying for a Slave Rebellion in 1804.

Ever wondered why Haiti is so poor? What follows are excerpts from a 2007 interview with political activist Randall Robinson by Amy Goodman on the radio show, Democracy Now!

AMY GOODMAN: *Let's talk history for a minute, something the US press doesn't give us very much of. To understand the US role today in Haiti, can you go back in time to how Haiti was founded in 1804?*

RANDALL ROBINSON: Well, Haiti was the largest piece of France's global empire. It was its great profit center, that slave colony with 465,000 enslaved Africans working there, many of whom had been soldiers in African armies before they were brought to Haiti. And in August of 1789 -- or 1791, rather, 40,000 of those slaves revolted and started a war that lasted twelve-and-a-half years under the leadership of an ex-slave and a military genius named Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines. And this army of ex-slaves defeated two French armies, first the French army before the completion of their revolution and then another army dispatched by Napoleon under the leadership of his brother-in-law, and then the armies of England and Spain. 150,000 blacks died in that twelve-and-a-half-year war. And in January of 19 -- 1804, rather, they declared Haiti the first free republic in the Americas, because the United States was then a country that held slaves.

During the revolution, Thomas Jefferson said he would like to reduce Toussaint to starvation. George Washington lamented and vilified that revolution. The US imposed an embargo, recognized a new French government, but did not recognize the new Haitian free government and imposed a comprehensive economic embargo on Haiti until the Emancipation Proclamation. In fact, France imposed reparations on Haiti in 1825, and the interest that Haiti had to pay in loans that were American and French loans to service this debt to France, absorbed virtually 80% of Haiti's avail-



able budget 111 years after the completion of their revolution until 1915. It was only in 1947 that Haiti was able to pay off its debt.

AMY GOODMAN: *The debt that was incurred as a result of France not having access to the enslaved people of Haiti.*

RANDALL ROBINSON: The Haitians had to pay France for no longer having the privilege of owning Haitian slaves. That revolution provoked the end of slavery in the Americas. And so, that's why it is so important that all African people, people generally in the Americas, because Haiti funded and fought in South American revolutions. That's why Haiti is so honored in places like Venezuela by people like Simon Bolivar. Haiti was central to all of this. And we're in Haiti's debt. But it is for that --

AMY GOODMAN: *Simon Bolivar came to Haiti.*

RANDALL ROBINSON: Haiti, and was given arms and was given men, was given a printing press, because the Haitians believed that anybody who was enslaved anywhere had a home and a refuge in Haiti. Anybody seeking freedom had a sympathetic ear in Haiti. But because of that, the United States and France and the other Western governments, even the Vatican, made them pay

for so terribly long. It's as if the anger of it never abated. I mean, you can hear Frederick Douglass talking about it in the late 1800s, about this thing in the American crowd.

AMY GOODMAN: *The US government didn't recognize Haiti for decades, the Congress, going back to Thomas Jefferson, afraid that the slave uprising would inspire US slaves.*

RANDALL ROBINSON: Would inspire US slaves to revolt against him in Virginia, and George Washington, and on and on and on. And so, they opposed everything that was being done in Haiti that won their freedom.

AMY GOODMAN: *The US government invaded Haiti in 1915 under Wilson.*

RANDALL ROBINSON: Woodrow Wilson invaded Haiti in 1915. And when a Haitian, Peralte, Charlemagne Peralte, organized the Cacos soldiers, these farmers, to fight against this American occupation, the Americans killed him and nailed him to a cross, crucifixion-style, and stood him up, his corpse, in a public place in Haiti to demonstrate to Haitians what would be the price of any defense against the American invasion. The US has played a terrible role in Haiti.

Listen to Democracy NOW! on public radio

Congressman Carney Secures \$350k for CAPPA

Funding to Boost Academic Achievement and Gang Prevention for Williamsport Agency

Dec. 17, 2009

Washington, D.C.—Congressman Chris Carney has secured \$350,000 for the Community Alliance for Progressive Positive Action, a Williamsport organization aimed at boosting students' academic achievement and reducing gang violence. The organization plans a youth intervention and development project that includes an academic enrichment program as well as performing arts and basketball programs and a youth employment initiative.

"Enabling our youth to get started on a positive track is crucial for our communities," Congressman Carney said. "This project is a worthwhile investment that promotes academic achievement, provides for better public safety and is a boost to our region's economy through the expansion of an existing program."

The Community Alliance for Progressive Positive Action (CAPPA, Inc.) boosts academic achieve-



Congressman Chris Carney

ment and reduces gang activity by providing safe after-school alternatives for youth. The organization serves 400-plus economically disadvantaged youth through after-school and extended-year learning centers, a performing arts program, a summer basketball program and a youth employment project.

"This proactive investment in our community will reap benefits for years to come. It will enable CAPPA to sustain several jobs for its current personnel and allow us the opportunity to continue our work in community development," said Loni Gamble, executive director of CAPPA. "With this funding support, CAPPA can provide realistic approaches to reach many disenfranchised youth and move them to become successful, happy and productive citizens. CAPPA sincerely thanks Congressman Carney for his unwavering support."

CAPPA will track students' grades and absences from school to measure academic successes in partnership with the Williamsport Area School District and document the participation levels in partnership with the Lycoming County Public Housing Authority. It will assess the gang-related crime statistics provided in partnership with the Williamsport Police Department and record employment placements.

Funding was approved in the Consolidated Appropriations Bill passed this month and will be provided through the Department of Justice.

Rotary Club supports Campbell Street Center

Roberta (Bobbi) Lloyd, President of the River Valley Rotary Club announced that a spaghetti dinner fundraiser was held at the Annunciation Parish Center on Tuesday, January 12, 2010. She encouraged the entire community to participate. "In an email promoting the event, Ms. Lloyd said, "Please bring your family and friends to the dinner. We will have great food, raffles, auctions and community spirit!"

According to Melodie Russell, Director of the Campbell Street Center, about 400 people came to the dinner. "We raised nearly \$3,500!" she said, "and we're expecting more pledges to come in." Recently, Russell was forced to layoff several members of her staff due to budget cuts.

If you would like to make a donation you can log on to the Center's website, CAMPBELLSTREETCENTER.ORG, or send a check to Campbell Street Community Center, 600 Campbell st., Williamsport, PA 17701.

Support the Center. (AKA the Bethune-Douglass Recreation Center). It's our history.

Malcolm X's Daughter to come to Williamsport!



Dr. Malikah Shabazz, the youngest daughter of Malcolm X, will speak at Penn College on January 18 at 6 p.m. in the Klump Academic Center Auditorium, Shabazz will present "Dr. King's Message." Sponsored by the Cultural Life Committee at Penn College, the event is free and open to the public.

Dr. King's Peace Message During a Time of War.

On December 10, 2009, President Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize. He reasoned that the current War on Terror is a "just war".

Martin Luther King's
Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech
December 10, 1964, Oslo, Norway

I accept the Nobel Prize for Peace at a moment when twenty-two million Negroes of the United States of America are engaged in a creative battle to end the long night of racial injustice. I accept this award in behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice.

I am mindful that only yesterday in Birmingham, Alabama, our children, crying out for brotherhood, were answered with fire hoses, snarling dogs and even death. I am mindful that only yesterday in Philadelphia, Mississippi, young people seeing to secure the right to vote were brutalized and murdered. And only yesterday, more than 40 houses of worship in the State of Mississippi alone were bombed or burned because they offered a sanctuary to those who would not accept segregation.

I am mindful that debilitating and grinding poverty afflicts my people and chains them to the lowest rung of the economic ladder.

Therefore, I must ask why this prize is awarded to a movement which is beleaguered and committed to unrelenting struggle; to a movement which has not won the very peace and brotherhood which is the essence of the Nobel Prize.

After contemplation, I conclude that this award which I receive on behalf of that movement is profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time - the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.

Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. Negroes of the United States, following the people of India, have demonstrated that nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation. Sooner or later all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood.

If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all

human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love. The tortuous road which has led from Montgomery, Alabama, to Oslo bears witness to this truth. This is a road over which millions of Negroes are travelling to find a new sense of dignity.

This same road has opened for all Americans a new ear of progress and hope. It has led to a new Civil Rights bill, and it will, I am convinced, be widened and lengthened into a superhighway of justice as Negro and white men in increasing numbers create alliances to overcome their common problems.

I accept this award today with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind. I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the "isness" of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal "oughtness" that forever confronts him.

I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him. I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.

I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of thermonuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.

I believe that even amid today's motor bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow. I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men.

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up. I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land.

"And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid."

I still believe that we shall overcome.

This faith can give us courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom. When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds and our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, we will know that we are living in the creative turmoil of a genuine civilization struggling to be born.

Today I come to Oslo as a trustee, inspired and with renewed dedication to humanity. I accept this prize on behalf of all men who love peace and brotherhood. I say I come as a trustee, for in the depths of my heart I am aware that this prize is much more than an honor to me personally.

Every time I take a flight I am always mindful of the man people who make a successful journey possible -- the known pilots and the unknown ground crew.

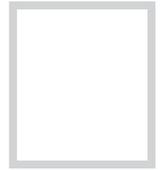
So you honor the dedicated pilots of our struggle who have sat at the controls as the freedom movement soared into orbit. You honor, once again, Chief (Albert) Luthuli of South Africa, whose struggles with and for his people, are still met with the most brutal expression of man's inhumanity to man.

You honor the ground crew without whose labor and sacrifices the jet flights to freedom could never have left the earth.

Most of these people will never make the headlines and their names will not appear in Who's Who. Yet when years have rolled past and when the blazing light of truth is focused on this marvelous age in which we live -- men and women will know and children will be taught that we have a finer land, a better people, a more noble civilization -- because these humble children of God were willing to suffer for righteousness' sake.

I think Alfred Nobel would know what I mean when I say that I accept this award in the spirit of a curator of some precious heirloom which he holds in trust for its true owners -- all those to whom beauty is truth and truth beauty -- and in whose eyes the beauty of genuine brotherhood and peace is more precious than diamonds or silver or gold.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



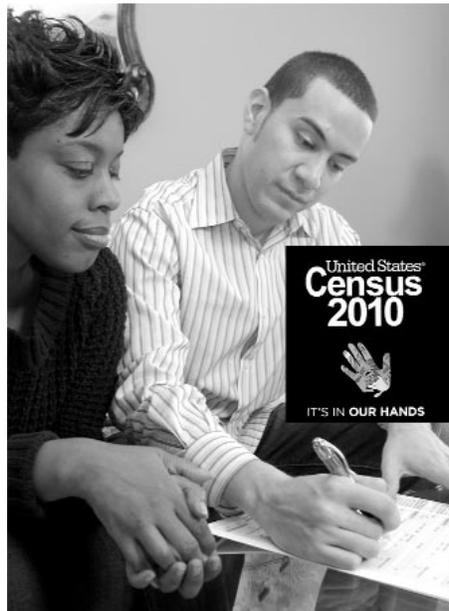
U.S. Census Bureau Opens Office in Williamsport

PITTSBURGH (Nov. 18, 2009) - With Census Day (April 1, 2010) less than five months away, all operations are moving into high gear to ensure that every person residing in the United States is counted.

Today, Census officials and community leaders celebrated the opening of a new office, located at 1020 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 12B, in Williamsport, PA. The office will serve the following 11 counties: Bradford, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union and Wyoming.

During the opening ceremony, Nunzio Cerniglia, Assistant Regional Census Manager for the Philadelphia Regional Census Center welcomed community leaders and elected officials and provided highlights of major initiatives that will be undertaken in the coming months to increase the response rate to the 2010 Census.

Speaking on behalf of the community about the importance of a complete count to the region were: Jeff Wheeland and Ernie Larson, Lycoming County Commissioners; Susan Mathias, Regional Coordinator, Congressman Christopher Carney's Office; Tonya Anderson, Chief of Staff for PA Representative Richard Mirabito; Major Steven Stoops, Commanding Officer for The Salvation Army; and Gerald Smith, President Lycoming Tri-County NAACP. Five year-old Tashana Gadsen performed the National Anthem and CAPPAYG's (Young Gentlemen), who have become youth ambassador for the 2010 Census, concluded



To insure proper representation in the United States Congress, African-Americans must be counted.

the program with a performance. Stephanie Ellison, Certified Sign Language Interpreter, interpreted for the hearing impaired.

Cerniglia stated "We are pleased that the leaders of this community have taken such a proactive approach with the 2010 Census to ensure a complete count. The elected officials together with community leaders from both the private and public sectors have initiated a number of outreach activities to educate and engage the residents as to why the 2010 is easy, safe and important."

To date, 11 organizations have signed formal partnership agreements with the U.S. Census Bureau.

With just 10 questions, the 2010 questionnaire takes about 10 minutes to complete. All information is confidential and is not shared with any other government agency. The Census is important because congressional representation and the distribution of federal funds for a wide variety of projects that range from social services for people of all ages to transportation and infrastructure are determined by using Census statistics.

Cerniglia also announced that the recruitment process for jobs that will be available in the spring began on November 15. **Hundreds of field positions will be filled this winter for the next major operation. Interested applicants are encouraged to call 1 866-861-2010 for information on how to apply.** Currently, the Williamsport office employs 25 people.

The U.S. Constitution requires a population and housing count every 10 years. The effort employs some of the most sophisticated technical and operational tools available, as well as a workforce of 1.4 million temporary employees to count every man, woman and child once and in the right place. Census results are the basis for congressional representation as well as the distribution of federal, state, and local funds totaling more than \$400 billion annually. Census Day is April 1, 2010.

For more information about the 2010 Census, visit www.census.gov/2010census.